The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

# RECRUITER SELECTION: MAKING THE BETTER CHOICE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL DON JENKINS United States Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

**USAWC CLASS OF 1999** 



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

19990618 120

# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Recruiter Selection: Making the Better Choice

Ву

LTC Don Jenkins US Army

# Dr. Herbert Barber Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

<u>DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:</u>
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

ii

# **ABSTRACT**

AUTHOR: LTC Don Jenkins

TITLE: Recruiter Selection: Making the Better Choice.

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 07 April 1999 PAGES: 26 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

"Desperate Army offers \$3,000 enlistment bonuses" reads the November 23, 1998 edition of the Army Times. The Army missed its recruiting goal for 1998 by 750 soldiers. This gap in recruiting the needed number of young men and women is the largest this decade. The US Army is a force that has enduring needs for new soldiers (young men and women) in sufficient numbers to ensure adequate end-strength. Over the course of the years, since 1973, the ability to obtain the requisite number of young men and women has been problematic. Today there are approximately 6000 recruiters and a significant budget dedicated to obtaining this goal. The success of these recruiters has a great deal to do with the readiness of our Army today and into the next century. The recruiting force is experiencing difficulties in accomplishing their objective at a magnitude unlike that experienced in the past. This paper postulates that personality traits have a significant contribution to the success of a recruiter and that policy and practice should be changed to reflect this.

iv

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	. iii
List of Tables	. vii
Recruiter Selection; Making the Better Choice	1
INTRODUCTION	1
THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSED SOLUTION	3
BACKGROUND RECRUITER SELECTION POLICY POI REVIEW	4 8 11
RELATIVE SUCCESS	13
PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS	16
RELATED RESEARCH	18
INTEPRETATION/ANALYSIS	23
CONCLUSIONS	2.4
IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS	25
ENDNOTES	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31

vi

# LIST OF TABLES

		PAGE
Table 1	Training POI	12
Table 2	YATS Survey	15
Table 3	GAO Traits	19
Table 4	Successful Recruiter Profile	21

viii

# RECRUITER SELECTION; MAKING THE BETTER CHOICE INTRODUCTION:

The US Army is a force characterized by dramatic ebbs and flows of force structure (total number of soldiers). Given significant threats, or lack thereof, to our national interests the force structure fluctuates by thousands of individuals over the course of months or a few years. Most dramatically this is seen at the onset of a major military action (WW I, WW II, Korean conflict, Vietnam conflict) and/or immediately thereafter. recently our nation has experienced a significant force reduction resulting from a perceived lack of a threat by the former WARSAW PAC nations. Overlapping this phenomenon of repetitive and sometimes massive force reductions was the end of the mandatory draft in 1973. When the draft ended, the Army, as well as the Nation, was in a state of disillusionment over many aspects of the Vietnam conflict. Regardless of the social disgruntlement, the need for new recruits (soldiers) remained to ensure the appropriate force structure in support of the US National Security Strategy. As time went on, (since 1973), the ability to effectively recruit the number of qualified youth into the Army became increasingly difficult and a reemphasis on recruiting became necessary. Even though the Army had a recruiting force, the organization was experiencing difficulty in obtaining desired end strengths. To tackle this vexing issue MG Maxwell Thurman was appointed to assume command of the US Army Recruiting Command

in 1979 with instructions to "fix the problem." MG Thurman initiated many actions, studies and put many practices into effect to attract the best youth as new soldiers and obtain the best soldiers as recruiters. To a large degree the efforts and changes credited to MG Thurman were significant and enduring. Illustrating his success and enduring legacy is the recruiting slogan "Be All You Can Be". Moreover, Thurman expanded the use of corporate marketing techniques, significantly increased the operating (marketing) budgets for the command, developed temporary recruiting assignments (3 years) for new recruiters, and developed recruiting training programs for company grade officers

Consistent with the US Army requirement for a highly educated, trainable, and moral force, the Department of the Army (HQDA) selects only the top performing non-commissioned officers (NCO) to become field recruiters. After selection, the recruiter designee attends an intensive six weeks recruiting course at FT. Jackson SC (home of the US Army Recruiting and Retention School). Moreover, only after an extensive "probationary" period may a new recruiter officially change his Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and become a "cadre" recruiter (referred to as a 79R). However, even with the renewed effort in selection and training, the US Army consistently has difficulty in meeting force structure end strength.

#### THE PROBLEM AND A PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Simply stated, the problem within the recruiting force is the increasing difficulty and failure to recruit sufficient numbers of new soldiers to obtain the required end-strength. I believe that successful recruiting is a function of individual personality characteristics and personality traits. Therefore, evaluations of personality traits and/or demographic characteristics of a new field recruiter will contribute to predictions of performance success.

The issue today for the Army is very much the same as it was in the 1970's; recruiting qualified youth in the numbers needed. Even though obtaining the force structure is the problem, the difficulty in obtaining the requisite number of recruits is for entirely different reasons. The Army is having difficulty in obtaining the required end strength because there are many competing opportunities and the recruiting force is not prepared to adequately address this reality. Emphatically, the recruiting force consists of fine soldiers that receive excellent training but the training alone is not sufficient to prepare them for the task. However, it is my belief that the inability to obtain proper force structure numbers is not in the quality of training received by recruiters but in the individual demographic and personality traits(s) of the recruiter. If the "proper" traits are embodied in an individual, the likelihood of success is greater. Therefore, these identified traits should weighed

carefully and be used to prescreen (prior to selection) a recruiter designee.

The expected results of this effort will be to identify those specific traits that are better predictors of a successful field recruiter. The implication as a result of this effort will be to affect HQDA policy concerning the selection process and the Program of Instruction (POI) at the US Army Recruiting and Retention School for newly selected recruiters. The selection process, which will be addressed in more detail later, chooses new recruiters, in part, based on a percentage basis of Military Occupational Skill (MOS). This current policy fails to recognize other potential selection criteria that may be more relevant in predetermining success as a recruiter. The policy should be reviewed with consideration given to using personality or other demographic traits. As a result the Retention School POI should be revised to enhance the natural abilities of the new recruiter. Logically then the recruiters that arrive in the local communities will have a statistically greater likelihood of success. Therefore, the likelihood of the Army maintaining the desired end strength will be improved.

#### BACKGROUND:

To better understand the nature and difficulty in recruiting a high quality force, a brief history review will be necessary.

The "draft" as we have known it has been used often in this century until 1973. Conscription has been used throughout

American history to raise armies to execute the political will of the people since the Civil War. It is not necessary to relate the difficulties of today to those experienced centuries ago but it is significant to note that since early 1900 the draft has been used more often than not. The first draft, as we understand it, was adopted into law May 18 1917. The bill lapsed in 1919 and America had an all-volunteer force from 1919 to 1940. Just prior to World War II, September 1940, the Selective Service Act was signed and the US had a draft that remained in effect until 1947. Again, from April 1947 until June 1948 America had an allvolunteer force. However, in June of the same year a new Selective Service Act was passed with a two-year limit to recruit a maximum force structure of two million men<sup>2</sup>. During this time an interesting phenomena occurred. The requirement to register for the draft tended to encourage voluntary service resulting in increased enlistment. Because of this phenomena there was remarkably only a need to conscript a few thousand men. This so encouraged the Truman Administration that he requested the Selective Service Act be extended for another three years3. Another interesting development resulting from the lack of need to actually draft personnel was the increased allowance for deferments<sup>4</sup>. Increased deferments would later become a much debated issue addressed in the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force (Gates Commission) which questioned the projected ability of America to sustain a professional Armed Fore

as a matter of practice and law. In fact, the number inducted under the Selective Service Act "during the mid-1950's, more than a third, dropped to less than 10% during the early 1960's"5. Ending the draft January of 1973 after Congress accepted the recommendation of the Gates Commission finally concluded the onagain-off-again draft. However, as mentioned earlier "the Gates Commission, which in the 1960's developed the blueprint for the all-volunteer force that the United States adopted in 1973 and maintains today, dealt a mortal wound to the principle of obligation by explicitly identifying financial inducements as the major incentive for voluntarism"6. If this mortal wound is true, there is a clear disadvantage for recruiters today in an environment of economic prosperity. Recruiters are faced with the competition of economic good without the advantage of appealing to a sense of obligation that may have been more customary in the past and could have been a deciding factor to enlist.

It is illustrative at this juncture to review several of the key issues before the Gates Commission. President Nixon stated "we have lived with the draft so long that too many of us accept it as normal and necessary". Nixon may have overstated this issue in that even though the Nation has had a draft it has had many years of exclusive voluntary enlistment periods (as stated earlier) and though there was compulsory registration actual induction's were few. Briefly viewing several of the nine (9)

key issues or objections before the Gates Commission it is clear that the underlying theme is "can America afford an All-Volunteer-Force"? One objection was: An all-volunteer force will be too costly-so costly the Nation cannot afford it"7. In rebuttal the Commission reasoned that cost savings will accrue as a reduction in training costs due to lower personnel turnover and fewer conscientious objectors to deal with8. Another objection postulated that "an all-volunteer force will undermine the patriotism by weakening the traditional belief that each citizen has a moral responsibility to serve his country". The Gates Commission took the view that to force someone to serve "undermined respect for the government" and that the best answer on moral and practical ground is for voluntary service9. Yet another objection presented to the Commission was: "those joining the all-volunteer force will be men from the lowest economic classes, motivated primarily by monetary rewards rather that patriotism. An all-volunteer force will be manned by mercenaries". The Commission members took issue with this objection by responding that maintaining high mental, physical, and moral standards of all inductees from all economic groups will preclude this from happening. Moreover, the Commission believed that the pay incentive would attract more, not less, of those individuals that may have greater civilian potential 10. Finally, the Gates Commission had to deal with the objection that: "The defense budget will not be increased to provide for an all-volunteer force, and the Department of Defense will have to cut back expenditures in other areas......................... and will be a potentially serious deterioration of the nation's overall military posture". The Commission argued that regardless of the composition of the force the public attitude has been to support the needs of the nation in the past and is expected to do so in the future.

In 1973 the Gates Commission recommendation for the end of the draft and to adopt the All Volunteer Force (AVF) became a reality and America started on a course that, cost and difficulty aside, has arguably, produced the best army in the world. However the road to the success of today has been "rocky" and there has been difficulties associated with "recruiting Americas' Army".

# Recruiter Selection Policy:

The Military Occupationally Specialty (MOS) "79R" is not an accession MOS. "USAREC must "grow its own" force of career recruiters. Through voluntary reclassification of detailed recruiters...after recommendation and counsel by their chain of command regarding their potential and desire for reclassification to PMOS 79R" this can be done 12."

As previously stated US Army recruiters are selected from among the "best" within the Army and must be a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) prior to nomination/selection. "Detailed recruiters serve a 3-year tour with USAREC. They are obtained

from two sources: DA selection and volunteers. Volunteers comprise 30 percent of the detailed recruiter force, historically perform better than non-volunteers, and are more likely to convert to Primary Military Occupational Specialty 79R, Cadre Recruiter.

The process of selecting a new recruiter is lengthy vet rather straightforward. The USAREC Recruiting Operations Team, which is attached to the Adjutant General Branch in Enlisted Personnel Management Division, PERSCOM, determines the projected number of detail recruiters needed to keep USAREC at its authorized manning level and tasks the various career branches to supply nominations. Simultaneously, the Recruiting Operations Team receives names of volunteers from USAREC's Recruit the Recruiter Team based on the their visit to Army installations world wide. The Recruiting Operations Team screens the records of the nominees and the volunteers to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria outlined in AR 601-1, Chapter 2."13 (Note: There is no provision in AR 601-1 for a selected soldier to decline recruiting duty if nominated). Based upon earlier studies and analysis potential detail recruiters were sought based upon their MOS. The MOS "mix of recruiters recently changed from 40 percent Combat Arms, 30 percent Combat Support, and 30 percent Combat Service Support to 37 percent, 31.5 percent, and 31.5 percent respectively."14 These percent changes were due, in part,

to the Combat Arms branch difficulty in maintaining field operating strength within the NCO Corps.

Once individuals were identified within the proper MOS categories the "Recruiting Operations Team forward the names of the nominees and volunteers to the USAREC security liaison at the Crime Records Center and Ft. Belvoir VA for a review of the NCO's law enforcement and intelligence files. If no derogatory information is found, the NCO is placed on orders to attend the Army Recruiter Course at Fort Jackson, and the screening process continues. If derogatory information is found, it is extracted from the records and sent to HQ USAREC for final suitability determination. Disqualified soldiers are returned to their branches for assignment .... Those accepted by HQ USAREC are placed on orders and processing continues". 15 Throughout the determination process the potential new detail recruiter becomes the object of several additional reviews. "When a solder is selected for recruiting, the Recruiting Operations Team notifies the soldier through the servicing MILPO (note: Military Personnel Office) and enters the soldier's basic information and tentative class date on the Enlisted Distribution and Assignment System (EDAS). The soldier continues the screening process by completing a financial statement and obtaining an evaluation from his battalion commander (pending change to AR 601-1) will add the requirement for a review of medical records and interview by a psychologist. The Recruiting Operations Team reviews the

commander's evaluation and the soldier's financial statement to make the final determination of the soldier's qualification for recruiting duty. If fully qualified, the Recruiting Operations Team notifies HQ USAREC, and the soldier complies with TDY (note: Temporary Duty) orders to attend the Army Recruiter Course." After graduation, they are assigned to one of five recruiting brigades (head quarters with in the US---but may have recruiting responsibility overseas). Over 50 percent of the non-volunteers are typically assigned to their recruiting brigade of choice." Upon arrival at their respective assigned battalions (typically 45 days after graduation) the detail recruiter begins a "9-month probationary period during which they are evaluated for their potential to succeed in the assignment" 18.

# Program of Instruction (POI) Review:

After selection as a new recruiter the NCO attends the Recruiter Training Course at FT Jackson SC. For six weeks the NCO is introduced to the practice and techniques of recruiting. While at the course subjects that range from regulatory guidance to instruction on how to overcome rejection are taught. POI instructors are some of the finest and most experienced recruiter trainers in the Army. The following is a brief overview of the Program of Instruction (POI) taught at the Recruiting Course.

The objective or purpose of the recruiting course as stated by the USAREC is "to provide selected enlisted personnel with the

skills, knowledge and techniques required to perform as US Army and Army Reserve Recruiters" 19.

The curriculum is broken down into six distinct parts beginning with introductions and concluding with final examinations (Table 1).

#### TABLE 1

# USA RECRUITING COMMAND (USAREC)

# RECRUITER TRAINING PROGRAM (POI)

recruiter school. "Sales technique" represent 47.9% of the POI.

The total course is 244 hours (5 weeks and 4 days) long. By way of comparing the relative importance placed on each segment the "Sales Techniques/Communications" block is 47.9% of the entire course. Time spent for Sales is followed distantly by Management at 13.9%.

This course is taught in a classroom environment however, the POI is replete with practical exercises (PE). Significantly, the course uses PE's for over 50% of all instruction. This method of hands-on-performance-oriented-training is consistent with US Army doctrine and is a proven positive method of teaching. Additionally, this technique lends itself well to

cross fertilization of successful real world applications that can be tailored to the needs of the individual student. As the student progresses through the training course he/she must demonstrate competency at each interval.

The students understanding of all subject material taught is put to the test during the Sales portion of the curriculum.

During this segment the student must demonstrate his "knowledge and skill required to effectively communicate ideas and concepts to applicants and the general public<sup>20</sup>. The student experiences numerous situational scenarios that will challenge his ability to present the "Army Story" in such a way as to cause a potential applicant to enlist in the Army. The situations developed for the student are similar in design and setting as that experienced by field recruiters on a daily basis. These settings are established by constructing "recruiting stations" with all the resources normally available to any field recruiter and allowing him to develop the situation to a successful conclusion. As noted earlier these practical exercises are 117 hours (over 50% of the total course length when examinations are discounted).

### Relative Success:

So where are we and where are we going with the recruiting effort of nearly 6000 of the "best" NCO's within the Army? The AVF is the best our nation has seen but can the recruiting force access the best and brightest of Americas' youth in sufficient numbers to remain so? Enlistment Among Applicants for Military

Service Determinants and Incentives by Bruce R. Orvis and Martin T.Gahart (RAND report 1990) finds: "despite the interest in military service that application implies and the time invested in such persons by recruiters and the ASVAB administrators--nearly half of all high quality male applicants do not enlist... The results indicate that, even after application, civilian job opportunities, social support for enlisting, college plans, and finances have substantial effects on the enlistment decisions of young men"21. This report reflecting the period prior to 1990 is corroborated in 1994 by a GAO report that holds that recruiting is reported to be "getting more difficult"22 even though goals are being met. There is much evidence that this is true as illustrated by yet another 1994 GAO report to Senator Pryor; Military Recruiting More innovative Approaches Needed, finds that of the recruiting offices "50% of these offices provide just 13.5% of the recruits"23. Moreover, "DOD and the services are concerned about what they believe are recent decreases in the size of the recruiting market. They also believe that, in the foreseeable future, the recruiters' ability to attract quality personnel may be limited by a reduction in the propensity of young people to join the military (as measured by the annual Youth Attitude Tracking-YATS--Survey). In fact, according to a 1994 US GAO report, Army and Navy recruiting commanders believe that they may need to lower their current target for the quality of their enlistees if the services are to meet their requirements

for the numbers of personnel."<sup>24</sup> This is particularly disturbing when the number of accessions per recruiter "fell by over 60%" between the years 1980 and 1995<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, this trend has continued and a subsequent report (1996 RAND Corp.) identifies a compounding problem of diminishing supply (decreased propensity), as expressed in YATS, with increased difficulty in converting the supply of youth positively propensed to enlist into new recruits (a problem of conversion)<sup>26</sup>.

TABLE 2

Potential High-Quality Enlisted Supply: Index of Supply/Requirement

Ratio relative to Predrawdown (FY89) Ratio (Fall 1988-1994 Youth Attitude

Tracking Survey, Males Age 16-24)

Year	DoD	Army	Navy	USMC	USAF
FY94	1.25	1.50	1.02	1.01	1.17
FY95	1.09	1.28	1.09	0.79	1.10
FY96	1.01	1.04	1.01	0.84	1.11
FY97	0.93	0.88	1.02	0.77	1.13

NOTE: Figures are for the indicated year versus FY89 and control for the difference in accession requirements for the two years. The data reflect the continuous decline in the likelihood of young people to join the Department of Defense.

This research illustrates the severity of the difficulty by comparing the index of supply/requirements ratio relative to predraw-down (FY89) of males ages 16-24 and projecting them through 1997. DOD, more specifically the Army saw a continuing reduction in this ratio between years 1994 through 1997. The ratio each year respectively is 1.5, 1.28, 1.04, .88 (Table 2) clearly

showing an actual decline and a projected decline in those population pools that express a positive propensity for enlistment.<sup>27</sup> This analysis clearly illustrates that the earlier concern for the difficulty of recruiting was warranted and that the individual recruiter can expect to have greater difficulty in achieving mission success. Speculation as to why some recruiters are more successful than other recruiters fall principally upon the personality traits of the individual. Later in this paper preliminary scientific evidence will be shown to support this speculation. Anecdotal evidence, from personal experience, suggests that NCO's that are more energetic, well organized, outgoing, and caring have the best success rates.

#### PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS:

According to James R. Thomas Reengineering DOD Recruiting (RAND 1997) "Recruiting requirements are now on the upswing. This occurred because, during the post-Cold War draw-down, the Army temporarily cut back on accessions to help bring down the force size. Now that the draw-down is completed, it must increase its recruiting goals to maintain a constant strength level. As a result, the Army's recruiting goal for 1997 called for nearly 50 percent more accessions than were obtained in 1995" 28. Mr. Thomas recognizes the difficulty recruiters are having due to propensity and supply, as stated above, and suggests several ways to correct for an impending shortfall. Mr. Thomas suggests increased resources and "structural changes are needed...to make

recruiting systems more efficient...improve efficiency in a crucial area: use of recruiters' time."29 Mr. Thomas believes the recruiting effort could be improved by establishing a series of "low cost" regional telemarketing centers that would "prequalify" (authors emphasis) potential recruits. Then a "lead" would be assigned to a respective military service for a recruiter to approach the potential applicant for purposes of enlistment. Mr. Thomas believes that following this commercial sales technique would reduce the amount of time the sales force (recruiter) needs to devote to any individual potential applicant.

Moreover, Thomas suggests the need for greater market awareness through teams of professional telemarketing personnel. An analysis of this article reveals a modified approach of the current system that develops potential leads identified at a national/regional level then assigned to an individual recruiter. Mr. Thomas' article rightfully identifies the difficulty in recruiting and the vast number of working hours by recruiters to be increasing which strongly suggests the need for a new approach. In fact, the 1998 Report to the Subcommittee on Personnel, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate "Military Recruiting" states: DOD's 1996 survey of service recruiters showed that the number of hours that recruiters work reached it highest point since 1989. Despite this effort, less that one-half

of the recruiters achieved their goals in 9 or more months of a 12-month period…only 42 percent met goals."  $^{30}$ 

### RELATED RESEARCH:

A current data analysis (by this author) of 124 recruiters revealed that disturbingly few of those surveyed met their monthly goals (each month) during an eleven (11) month period between October 1997 and August 1998. However, the average improved to approximately 27 percent when the eleven months were considered as a whole.

As the previous discussion has illustrated the recruiting effort is not getting easier for a variety of reasons. Not to overstate a position but the All-Volunteer Force can only work if there are sufficient numbers of high quality youth entering the Army to maintain the required end strength. The only method used to maintain the required force structure is to recruit youth using the recruiters available. As discussed the Army recruiting force is obtained from the best of the Army. If the best of the Army, all NCO's, are having significant difficulties achieving recruiting objectives there must be a systemic problem somewhere.

According to the 1998 GAO report "recruiters are selected from among the best noncommissioned officers in the military, but they do not necessarily identify those who possess or can develop the communications and interpersonal skills needed to become successful recruiters." As discussed earlier the Army follows a process, a "checklist", to ensure the potential new recruiter

does not have any disqualifying matters (financial, medical, current job specialty skill performance etc.) and does not address any "measurable standards regarding the prospective recruiters' communication or interpersonal skills". <sup>31</sup> To highlight this point, "in 1996 the Air Force...administered a commercially developed biographical screening test to 1,171 recruiters, the Air Force found that recruiters with certain traits were much more likely to succeed than recruiters who lacked those traits"<sup>32</sup>. The GAO report listed the "traits" in order of importance from "assertiveness" to "reality testing" (Table 3).

# TABLE 3

# GAO: RECRUITER CONSIDERED TRAITS

Assertiveness

Empathy

Self-regard (awareness of strengths and weaknesses)

Problem solving ability

Happiness and optimism

Interpersonal relations

Emotional self-awareness (ability to recognize one's
 feelings)

Reality testing (ability to distinguish between what you see (sic) and what is).

Note: GAO listed traits the USAF listed in order of importance.

The study also found that high performers worked the least number of hours and reported higher martial satisfaction and that neither the recruiter's geographic region nor zone was a factor in predicting the recruiters success."  $^{33}$  The mentioned traits seem self-evident and are resident in all persons to a greater or lessor degree. However, the traits this author has noted in most successful recruiters are assertiveness, optimism, and highly developed positive interpersonal skills. Likewise, the GAO report reveals that the "Air Force recruiters are more than twice as productive as recruiters from the other services."34 This is even more relevant when considering the point that "a noncommissioned officer can excel in many military job specialties without possessing the ability to effectively interact with the general civilian population." 35 The GAO report concluded "by carefully selecting recruiters based on a demonstrated aptitude for recruiting, as well as excellent performance in another military specialty, the services should be able to increase the effectiveness of their recruiters." 36 Further, this GAO report recommends to the Secretary of Defense to: 1) use experienced field recruiters to personally interview all prospective recruiters and evaluate their potential to effectively communicate with applicants, parents, teachers, and others..., 2) jointly explore the feasibility of developing or procuring assessment test that can aid in the selection of recruiters..."37.

Following this initiative the US Army Recruiting Command recently undertook an effort to "profile" a successful recruiter. This effort (Successful Recruiter Profile Project, May, 1998) compared the "successful" recruiter to less successful ones in an attempt to better predict identifiable personality characteristics of success. Though the study in not yet complete initial results are promising and support the thesis that personality traits play a significant role in determining recruiting success. The aforementioned study used the Prevue Aptitude Assessment and Plotkin Position Assessment instruments to screen, measure, and assess the relative projected success of recruiters. In this study group the "successful" recruiters outperformed the unsuccessful recruiters by 24 percent over nine months<sup>38</sup>.

• • • •					
Personality trait combinations identified in the "Successful Recruiter Profil Project" for the United States Army Recruiting Command, May 7, 1998. (ENDNOTE 38)					
[		range 10			
2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10) 11)	Cooperative	IndependentCompetitiveAssertiveConscientiousConventionalConventional			

The Prevue Aptitude Assessment instrument identified 13 personality trait combinations (Table 4) that depending upon where the individual scored on each would be a predictor of relative success. Key to this study is the score on each exhibited trait. A combined score (sum of all individual scores) over 72 predicts a potentially successful recruiter. However, each character trait has a qualifying score that must be met. Failure to meet these individual scores may disqualify the applicant thereby suggesting he may not be a successful recruiter. Interestingly, the research group interpretation of these scores, do not suggest that the better scores are those at the extremes of the range. Rather mid range scores are most suggestive of a successful recruiter. For example each coupled trait (Table 4) can score between 1 and 10. Using Diplomatic/Independent the better scores range approximately 4.5 to 6.5. Additional example scores suggesting success are Cooperation/Competitive (3.4 to 6.5), and Submissive/Assertive (3.5 to 8.5). Of particular note is that only two of the 13 trait combinations (Reserved/Outgoing & Restless/Poised) suggest a near extreme score (9.5) for success (5.5 to 9.5 & 6.0 to 9.5 respectively). Additional high score combinations (greater than 8) include Assertive, Organized and Extrovert. What can be immediately seen from this is that a "balanced" personality with some emphasis in certain areas are more like to make a recruiter successful. Moreover, the test author claims that the

implementation of this procedure would cost the US Government "less than fifty dollars per candidate and USAREC can:

- Significantly increase the quality of it's recruiting force
- 2) Decrease negative recruiter personnel actions
- 3) Save valuable resources
- 4) Ensure that NCO's who have had successful career are allowed to function in jobs where they are best suited."

# INTEPRETATION/ANALYSIS:

As can been gleaned from the previous discussion the ability for our recruiters to perform (obtain contracts in sufficient quantities at proper intervals) is key and critical to the overall success of maintaining proper manning levels. As shown the ability to accomplish this goal post draft period has been problematic at best. Moreover, as the economy improves and the youth in America become decreasingly propensed to join the military the job of the recruiter becomes more difficult. The selection of a recruiter capable to meet the challenge is critical. Training aside, the ability to "sell the Army" effectively must first start with a candidate that has the personality traits consistent with success. Training at Ft.

Jackson is excellent and proper, however, given a new recruiter predisposed to success (as a personality) will ensure the success of the individual and institution as a whole. The steps

initiated by the US Air Force and Army Recruiting Command are absolutely proper. The importance of this effort cannot be overstated as the quantity and quality of our Army is at stake. These two independent studies (USAF & USAREC) clearly corroborate the suggestion that personality traits have more than a minor role in successful recruiting.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

The conclusion that must be derived from the previous discussion is that emerging evidence suggests that personality traits do have an impact on recruiting. This conclusion then can have a significant impact on the method and success of the Army to meet its recruiting goals into the next century. The selection of recruiters must change so that the recruiting effort may change in a way to aggressively compete with the environment. stated earlier, the propensity of Americas' youth to enlist is declining, in part, due to improved economic conditions. effectively recruit in these "market" conditions, the recruiting force must be properly prepared. Notwithstanding the excellent training received at the Recruiting School the focus of "who to train" is off the mark. Propensity to enlist is the key and, as this propensity declines, the recruiter is even more critical as a counter effort. The recruiter must be equipped with the necessary tools, regardless of source (natural or learned), to overcome this obstacle. The current studies conducted by the

USAF and the Army Recruiting Command suggest certain personality traits that are critical in this effort.

It is clear that personality trait identification must continue since the average success rate per recruiter is less than satisfactory.

# IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

After considering the discussion and emerging scientific data several implications are immediately evident. A short discussion of each will follow in an attempt to discover significant second and third order effects.

Selection by MOS: Review the policy of selecting recruiters by percentage based upon MOS. As mentioned the Infantry branch is having difficulty meeting its quota (therefore the percentage was reduced). Preliminary data strongly suggests that personality trait pre-screening could be a better recruiter selection tool. Moreover, the current recruiter selection method (by MOS) may be counter-productive (e.g. all infantry solders score too high or too low in certain areas and should therefore NOT become recruiters). If this were the case then MOS percentage based selections would be purely arbitrary. Movement from this method would relieve the Infantry branch of this requirement and allow more of their NCO's to go to MTOE units. As noted earlier the opposite could be true also and the problem would be increased.

Involuntary selection: Currently the individual prospective has no ability to reject selection as a recruiter aside from a disqualifying professional or personal issue. This lock-step approach surely has a de-motivational affect on those individuals that do not desire to become a recruiter. Even though DoD doesn't typically "ask" soldiers to execute a given task there are numerous assignments that are categorized as "voluntary" (airborne, special forces, demolition etc.). An unmotivated soldier is hardly a good representative to the American public. Of course, too few "volunteers" might step-forward to adequately fill the needed positions but with a screening process that identifies those that may like the assignment the opposite could be true.

Training POI: A review of the POI would be required to address the needs of the "all-volunteer trait ideal" recruiting force. The POI would need to address the "how to recruit" and the regulatory requirements as few new recruiter trainees would have the background. However, the interpersonal aspect of recruiting (sales techniques) may need only a modicum of instruction. This aspect of recruiting is the part that is the most difficult to instruct (what makes a good sales person a good sales person). The POI could be shortened and a focus given to successful commercial sales techniques (possibly by commercial salespersons) could be developed. There is also the possibility that the current instructor cadre might require modification in terms of

numbers (may need fewer) and skills. The revised POI may require some instructors with greater psychology background, or commercial sales background (mentioned earlier).

Personality trait screening: This could be done at Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course (BNCOC). Accomplishing this task at BNCOC would be appropriate since all recruiters must be NCO's. Screening would be appropriate and early enough in the career path to maximize utility if recruiting duty were subsequently directed. Moreover, as the USAREC research author suggests, the cost would be minimal.

Funding: Though not the intention of this paper to discuss recruiting funding the possibility exists to provide significant opportunities for funding reductions through increased recruiter efficiency. As mentioned earlier only 13.5% of recruiting stations provide 50% of new recruits for the Army. If this ratio were to become closer to 1:1 the number of stations and number of recruiters could be reduced significantly.

End-strength: The objective of the recruiting effort is to provide the Army with the required man-power. Assuming the selection process were changed to encompass those soldiers that were pre-disposed for success, wanted to be a recruiter, and modify the POI to enhance dominate abilities the likelihood of achieving the needed soldier strength would be greater.

#### Recommendations:

The below listed recommendations outline the steps to be taken to effectively enhance the recruiting effort.

- Continue the use of successful personality trait identification.
- 2) Incorporate the results of the trait study into recruiter selection process.
- 3) Change the Program of Instruction at the Recruiting School to reinforce identified successful personality traits.
- 4) Modify recruiter selection process away from MOS percentages (quotas) to a personality trait based selection method.

Word count: 6,510

# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> David R. Segal, <u>Recruiting for Uncle Sam</u> (Lawrence, KS.,: University Press of Kansas, 1989,17.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid, 31.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid, 32.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid, 33.
  - <sup>5</sup> Ibid, 33.
  - <sup>6</sup> Ibid, 17.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard J. Whalen, ed., <u>The President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force</u> (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1970,2.
  - <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 13.
  - <sup>9</sup> Ibid, 14.
  - <sup>10</sup> Ibid, 17-18.
  - <sup>11</sup> Ibid, 18-20.
- <sup>12</sup> USAREC HQs, "The Detailed Recruiting Force," Memorandum for soldiers, Ft. Knox, Kentucky, no date.
- <sup>13</sup> LTC Hergert, "Recruiter Selection Process," Memorandum for soldiers, Jackson, Ms., 10 March 1998.
- No given author, "The Detailed Recruiting Force," Memorandum for soldiers, Ft. Knox, Ky., no date.
  - 15 Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> LTC Hergert, "Recruiter Selection Process," Memorandum for soldiers, Jackson, Ms., 10 March 1998.
- No given author, "The Detailed Recruiting Force," Memorandum for soldiers, Ft. Knox, Ky., no date.
- <sup>18</sup> LTC Garrett, "Recruiter Selection Process, "Memorandum for soldiers, Jackson, Ms., 10 March 1998.

- <sup>19</sup> No given author, "Army Recruiter," memorandum for soldiers, Ft. Jackson, S.C., 17 Feb. 1995.
  - <sup>20</sup> Ibid, 12.
- Bruce R. Orvis and Martin T. Gahart, <u>Enlistment Among</u>
  Applicant for Military Service: Determinants and Incentives
  (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1990), vii.
- Beth J. Asch and Bruce R. Orvis, Recent Recruiting Trends and Their Implications: Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations (Santa Monica: The Rand Publishing Corporation, 1994), 27.
- Honorable David Pryor, Military Recruiting: More Innovative Approaches Needed (Washington, D.C.: U S General Accounting Office, December 1994), 3.
  - 24 Ibid.
  - <sup>25</sup> Ibid, 37.
- 26 Bruce R. Orvis, Narayan Sastry, and Laurie L. McDonald, Military Recruiting Outlook (Santa Monica, CA.: The Rand Corporation, 1996), xi-xiv.
  - <sup>27</sup> Ibid, 17-18.
- Thomas, James R., "Reengineering DOD Recruiting." Issue Paper no.1 (1990): 1.
  - <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- Subcommittee on Personnel, <u>Military Recruiting: DOD Could Improve Its Recruiter Selection and Incentive Systems</u>
  (Washington, D.C.: U S General Accounting Office, January 1998), 36.
  - <sup>31</sup> Ibid, 16.
  - <sup>32</sup> Ibid, 17.
  - <sup>33</sup> Ibid, 17.
  - <sup>34</sup> Ibid, 18.

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Asch, Beth J., and Bruce R. Orvis. Recent Recruiting Trends and Their Implications: Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations. Santa Monica: The Rand Publishing Co., 1994.
- "The Detailed Recruiting Force." Memorandum for soldiers. No location, no date.
- Garrett, LTC. "Recruiter Selection Process." Memorandum for soldiers. Jackson, Ms., 10 March 1998.
- Hergert, LTC. "Recruiter Selection Process." Memorandum for soldiers. Jackson, Ms., 10 March 1998.
- Hissong, Jerry B. and Harris M. Plotkin, <u>Successful Recruiter</u>
  <u>Profile Project Vienna: 1998.</u>
- Orvis, Bruce R. and Martin T. Gahart, <u>Enlistment Among Applicants</u> for <u>Military Service</u>: <u>Determinants and Incentives</u>. Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1990.
- Orvis, Bruce R., Sastry, Narayan, and Laurie L. McDonald, Military Recruiting Outlook. Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1996.
  - Segal, David R., <u>Recruiting for Uncle Sam</u>. Lawrecnce, Ks: University Press of Kansas, 1989.
- Thomas, James R. "Reengineering DOD Security." Issue Paper, no. 1 (1990): 1.
- Whalen, Richard J., The President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force. Washington, D.C.: U S Government Printing Office, 1970.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. Military Recruiting: DOD Could Improve Its Recruiter Selection and Incentive Systems.
  Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, January 1998.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. Military Recruiting: More
  Innovative Approaches Needed. Washington, D.C.: U.S. General
  Accounting Office, December 1994.